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## FISHERY MANAGEMENT IN THE SCOBEEY AREA

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Poplar River

The Poplar River was sampled during the summer of 1968 by seining in several locations from the mouth of the West Fork to above Scobey, near Davis Beach. Seines are not the most efficient gear for some of the larger holes in the Poplar River, but they do yield at least a sample of the fish present. In seven seine hauls, 113 walleye pike were captured. These fish ranged in size from three pounds down to fingerling-sized young-of-the-year walleye. Since the Poplar River has not been stocked with walleye for approximately six years, this indicates that these fish have established themselves successfully and are reproducing naturally in the Poplar River.

After initial introductions of fish are made and reproducing populations establish themselves, planting of this same species is not only unnecessary but also misleading to the sportsmen. It is unnecessary because the tremendous number of fish hatched from natural reproduction makes even a million planted fish a relatively insignificant number. One spawning pair of walleye commonly lay several hundred thousand eggs. We feel additional plants of walleye fry into the Poplar River would only mislead the sportsmen who want to improve fishing. While such a plant would temporarily satisfy some people, it would really add nothing to the fishery in the Poplar because factors limiting the quality of walleye fishing would be ignored. We must admit that at present we know very little of these other factors in the Poplar River and that we do not have enough technically trained people to begin an intensive study to determine them at this time. District 6 fishery personnel will put what effort they can on this problem; however, it is entirely possible that the Poplar River is producing just as good a fishery as it can with the limiting factors of a long period of severe winter conditions and quite warm summer temperatures.

### West Fork Poplar River

Sampling on the West Fork of the Poplar River indicates that, although the habitat appears to be good, the stream has a very poor game fish population. In an attempt to establish better numbers of game fish, smallmouth bass were planted as small fingerlings in the summer of 1968. From the fish available for this plant, 1,000 were held out and planted in a pond near Glasgow to be reared to a larger size. Half of these will be planted in the West Fork as large fingerlings in 1969 and half as adults in 1970. In addition to these smallmouth plants, the West Fork of the Poplar River is scheduled for a plant of 6,000, 4-inch brook trout in 1969.

### Farm Ponds

Ponds currently on our stocking program for rainbow trout in the Scobey area include Christensen, Jensen, Whitetail, Loftsgaard, Edland, Chabot, Hatfield, Danelson, and Richardson Reservoirs. The Soil Conservation Service office in Scobey keeps us informed on new reservoirs with fishery potential.